



FACT SHEET

NL/TARACORP SUPERFUND SITE
GRANITE CITY, ILLINOIS
APRIL 1991

EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.



205125

SITE BACKGROUND

The NL/Taracorp site is located at 16th and Cleveland Boulevard in Granite City, Illinois, six miles north of the St. Louis Gateway Arch. The site has been used for operations related to metal processing since 1903 when it was opened by Hoyt Metal. The company was sold and renamed United Lead. NL Industries bought United Lead in 1928 and operated the facility until 1979 when it was bought by Taracorp Inc. Taracorp made metal products at the site.

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) began testing air quality for lead in 1978. Most (85 percent) of the air samples tested from Granite City between 1978 and 1981 had lead levels higher than levels the Federal government considers safe.

IEPA investigated the Taracorp plant in 1982 and found that site operations were causing the area's lead problems. After this, IEPA denied Taracorp's application to continue making lead products at the plant. Taracorp Inc. filed bankruptcy in December 1982. In 1986, U.S. EPA included the NL/Taracorp site on its list of sites that have serious hazardous waste problems. This list is called the Superfund National Priorities list. Sites on this list are studied and cleaned up by U.S. EPA or companies responsible for the waste problems.

In 1985, NL Industries signed a legal agreement to study the hazardous waste problems at and near the site, and look at ways to correct the problems. The study, called a remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS), began in January 1987 and ended in November 1988.

The investigation found that possible health risks from the NL/Taracorp site come mostly from direct contact with contaminated soils and materials, and from breathing contaminated dust. Touching or handling soil contaminated with lead is an example of direct contact. You can also breathe contaminated dust if it is blowing around on a windy day.

On March 30, 1990, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) issued a Record of Decision which outlined the plan for cleaning up the NL/Taracorp site. The cleanup plan includes collecting soil samples in over 1,000 yards and areas in Granite City, Venice, Madison and Eaglepark Acres, Illinois and removing residential soils which have lead concentrations greater than 500 parts per million. The soils will be dug up using small equipment and hand shovels. All yards which are dug up will be backfilled with clean soil and restored to their original condition (sodded, replanted, etc). No trees or large plants will be removed.

In order to collect the soil samples, U.S. EPA must obtain access to each yard that needs to be sampled from each individual property owner.

Section 104 (e) (1) of the Superfund law provides U.S. EPA with the right to enter contaminated property for the purpose of "determining the need for response, or choosing or taking any response action..." at a cleanup site. U.S. EPA prefers to obtain access to property through the consent of the property owner. Your signature on the access agreement allows U.S. EPA or its representatives access to your property to determine the appropriate scope of its cleanup action. In order to collect the soil samples, U.S. EPA must obtain access to all yards that need to be sampled from each individual property owner.

INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD

Lead exists naturally in most soils. Low levels of lead are common in the air, water, food and soil in cities because of the widespread use of lead in batteries, solders, paints, varnishes, gasoline additives and other products. Because excess exposure to lead can threaten health, the Federal government tries to help minimize the amount of lead in the air, water and soil by regulating its use. For example, the government has phased out the use of lead in gasoline.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF LEAD EXPOSURE

High lead levels in the body can cause damage to the nervous system, kidneys, the digestive system and the blood-forming process. In children, lead may stunt growth, harm mental development and impair hearing.

Children are most seriously threatened by lead contaminated soil. Young children are at risk because they often play in dirt and may put dirty hands in their mouths or, in some cases, eat dirt. In addition, children who lack proper nutrition may absorb more lead, and suffer more harmful effects. Pregnant women in these areas should seek prenatal care to protect their developing infants.

TIPS ON LEAD POISON PREVENTION

Until cleanup is completed, it is important for people living in the shaded areas (see attached map) to reduce possible exposure to lead contamination.

Here are some tips to protect your child from lead poisoning:

- Avoid play areas which are not covered with grass, gravel or other ground cover;
- Be sure you thoroughly wash all fruits and vegetables;
- Wash hands frequently;
- Always supervise young children to prevent the eating of dirt;
- Parents should provide youngsters with a well-balanced diet, including milk, cheese, cottage cheese, spinach, liver and dark green leafy vegetables.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information on the site and the Superfund program is available in an information repository located at the:

Granite City Public Library
2001 Delmar Avenue
Granite City, IL 62040

The following U.S. EPA personnel may be contacted if you have further questions.

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Office of Public Affairs
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MAILING LIST ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

If you would like your name and address placed on the mailing list for the NL/Taracorp site, please fill out and mail this portion to:

MaryAnn Croce-LaFaire
Community Relations Coordinator
Office of Public Affairs (5PA-14)
U.S. EPA Region 5
230 South Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60604

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
TELEPHONE: _____